

grades of high school in a town of 350 people that I came from. But there is only one way they teach math. They taught math the same way in that small school they teach it in the biggest and best school in the United States. That is, 1 and 1 equals 2, not 3.

I studied hard and I learned that. Some in this town with advanced degrees have decided that 1 plus 1 is 3. In fact, you can find it in the budget documents. The fact is, the American people all understand it is a mirage. None of this adds up. This is a tough time and it requires tough choices. I wish it weren't. I wish it was a time when we had unparalleled economic growth, when the economy was rebounding, the stock market was moving up, and everybody was employed. But the fact is that is not the case.

We face serious, abiding economic challenges. This President needs to send a program to this Congress and this Congress has a requirement, it seems to me—if this President won't act, the Congress has a requirement to act to say we need to put this country back on track. The current circumstances simply do not add up.

I used to teach economics in college for a couple years. Everyone talks about the business cycle. We have been hit with things in this economy that are pretty unparalleled. Some of us warned about this 2 years ago when the President proposed a \$1.7 trillion tax cut. Some of us said maybe we ought to be a little conservative here. What if the bottom falls out and we run into tough times, or turbulence, or get some bad economic news? They said not to worry. We have blue skies as far as you can see, straight ahead—budget surpluses forever, the President said. We passed that—not with my vote—long-term permanent tax cut, and then immediately we found out we were in a recession. We got hit with the terrorist attack of 9/11, and we were at a war with terrorists; and we now have the largest budget deficits we have seen. We had the largest corporate scandals in history. All of this is coming together at the same time, at the same intersection, and the budget surpluses turned into deficits, and the deficits got bigger and bigger.

The President says the antidote is to give more tax cuts and make them permanent. It seems to me he requires all of us to say we all like tax cuts. It would be nice if nobody had to pay any taxes. Count me in. I expect my constituents would appreciate the fact they would not have to pay taxes. Part of the cost of what we do together as citizens in building roads, schools, and providing for the common defense—part of the cost of that is the taxes we must pay. What the President is proposing in his budget is, by the way, let's be a bit short next year—about \$400 billion short—and we will charge it over to the kids. We will let the kids assume that role of paying for it. We will consume more than we are willing to raise, and we will let the kids pay it

off some time later. That doesn't add up, either.

By the way, the President also says, well, the economy is fundamentally sound, we don't need to do much right now in terms of stimulus. The fact is, when we teach about the contraction and expansion side of the economy in the business cycle, you teach about confidence. The expansion and contraction side of the business cycle is all about confidence. If people are confident in the future, they do the following: Buy a house, buy a car, take a trip. They do the things that manifest their confidence in the future because they have a job and they feel good about the future. And that confluence of individual acts around the country creates the expansion side of the business cycle. But when they are not confident about the future, they do the opposite. They defer the purchase of that appliance for their home, or that automobile they were looking to purchase, or the home, or the trip. When they defer that purchase, the economy contracts. It is all about the confidence with which the people view the future.

At the moment, the people are not confident about the future. There is not a lot we can do about the mechanics of the economy, because now the lead stories are about war, so there will never be confidence until we get through this period. We cannot ignore what is happening in our country with fiscal policy, trade policy, and a whole series of issues that some apparently feel we should pretend are all right but, in fact, are not all right—are seriously amiss.

That brings me back to the point I started with. The agreement that will be on the floor of the Senate this week dealing with the Moscow Treaty is just another piece of pretend policy. Everybody will vote for it. Why wouldn't you? What is wrong with it? But it does nothing. It says the U.S. and Russia are going to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, not by getting rid of them, but by putting them into storage. So what does that do to make the world safer? The answer is nothing. Most people know it.

There is the other piece of responsibility that is required—yes, of this President and of this Congress—and that is to provide world leadership and reduce the number of nuclear weapons, reduce the threat of nuclear war; and stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world. It is the President's and our responsibility here in Congress. We ought not to pretend that we are taking action that really has very little impact with respect to fiscal policy, trade policy, nuclear arms control policy, because that will not ensure the future of this country and will not give our children confidence about the future of this country or this world.

So, Mr. President, my hope and expectation is that we can make tough decisions and come together and decide, yes, if it is heavy lifting, it requires all of us to do it together. I am

tired of "let's pretend." That is what is happening all too often both at the White House and also here in the Congress. Let's pretend on nuclear arms policy. Let's pretend on fiscal policy and trade policy. That, in my judgment, is a foolish approach. We need to do better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. It is my understanding that morning business is going to end in a couple minutes; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In about 2 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I direct a question to my friend from Virginia. The Senator from Virginia is here and wishes to speak; is that right?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, on the issue of Miguel Estrada.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MIGUEL A. ESTRADA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session and resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 21, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Miguel A. Estrada, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before my friend starts, we have other people who wish to speak who can come this afternoon. I am curious as to roughly how long the Senator wishes to speak.

Mr. ALLEN. I suspect 15 to 20 minutes.

Mr. REID. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I rise once again to support Miguel Estrada's nomination to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Miguel Estrada is being treated unfairly by Senators on the other side of the aisle who continue to practice such blatant obstructionism in an effort to score petty partisan points. Indeed, the obstructing Senators are shirking, in my view, their duty by avoiding a vote on this gentleman, Miguel Estrada, who was nominated 22 months ago by President Bush.

This is not mere payback; it is an escalation in a bitter battle by the Senate Democrats to keep judges off this court who properly construe the Constitution and respect the laws duly enacted by the elected legislature. That is disappointing, and it is dangerous.